SOME NEW BOOKS.

Benjamin Franklin as He Was.

It is a singularly interesting book which SIDNEY GEORGE FISHER has given us under the title of *The True Benjamin Franklin* (Lippincott's). This is a successful attempt to bring out the real lineaments of the subject of the biography, lineaments which to a considerable extent, although not to so large an extent as in the case of Washington, have been obscured by legends. It is true that the human side of Franklin was so clearly revealed by himself in his autobiography that it was not possible for the myth-makers to conceal it entirely, so they had recourse to an exaggeration of the more exemplary phases of his character. In the course of his long career as politician, philosopher, man of science, author, philanthropist, reformer, and diplomatist, he did a great deal of sterling and admirable work, but almost every creditable incident of his life has been magnified, until, from the great and accomplished man he truly was, he has been converted into an impossible prodigy. Almost everything, for instance, that he wrote about in science has been put down as a discovery of his own. Statements which were merely memoranda, or simply represented his method of formulating other men's knowledge, are depicted as the outcome of original thought. Thus the translation of Cicero's "Essay on Old Age," which was made by James Logan and printed by Franklin at Philadelphia in 1744, was republished in 1809 by one of his editors, William Duane, in a collective edition of Franklin's works. Other editors have carried the process of expurgation to a ridiculous extreme, and it must be admitted that some of his letters, as, for example, one on the choice of a mistress, cannot be published in full. The necessity of some elisions of the kind did not warrant Temple Franklin in transforming the vigorous Anglo-Saxon of his grandfather's writings into stilted Latin phrases. Much less did it justify Weems, in his version of the autobiography, in substituting the "American Aquatic" for "Water American," the nickname which, as Franklin tells us, his fellow printers in London gave him because he would drink nothing but water. The author of the book before us believes in letting Franklin speak for himself wherever this may be done without shocking too grievously the reader's sense of propriety, and the result is that we are brought nearer to the man as he was than in any previous biography. In saying this we do not overlook the popular life by Parton or the elaborate work by Bigelow.

I.

The chapters to which the reader is likely to turn with especial curiosity are those which bear respectively the captions of "Religion and Morals" and "The Embassy to France and Its Scandals." It is well known that, although Franklin's parents were Massachusetts Puritans, he himself, at an early age, lost faith in the Christian religion and became a deist. He has himself explained how the change of belief was brought about. It seems that among his father's books were some sermons in which Shaftesbury, Collins and other deistical writers were violently attacked. Franklin thought that the arguments of the deists were much stronger than the attempts to refute them. After reading quotations from the authors named, Franklin was led to read their works at length, and he was ultimately converted to their views. No man who avowed such opinions could expect to prosper in Boston in the first quarter of the last century, and it was lucky for Franklin that he migrated to Philadelphia. In some of the articles which he contributed to his brother's newspaper, the *New England Courant*, he placed a sacrilegious hand upon the ark of the covenant by denouncing Harvard College and setting forth the worthlessness of its stupid graduates, nearly all of whom, he said, went into the Church, which is described as a temple of ambition and fraud, controlled by money. There is a touch of what would now be termed socialism or populism in these papers, and it is not surprising to find the author of them afterward writing a pamphlet in favor of an inflated paper currency. According to some comments on the *Courant*, which are ascribed to Cotton Mather, it was "full freighted with nonsense, unmanliness, raillery, profaneness, immorality, arrogance, calumnies, lies, contradictions and what not, all tending to quarrels and divisions, and to debauch and corrupt the minds and manners of New England." The truth is that, in the eyes of his Boston contemporaries, Franklin was a terrible example of the results of being born on Sunday. His own birth had occurred on Jan. 6, 1706, which was a Sunday, and, in those Massachusetts towns where the ministers were strict, baptism might have been refused to him, for some of the severer Puritans held that a child born on the Sabbath must also have been conceived on the Sabbath, and was, therefore, hopelessly unregenerate.

After Franklin left Boston his dislike for the religion of that place, and, indeed, for all revealed religion, increased. In London, whither he proceeded from Philadelphia, he wrote a pamphlet entitled "Liberty and Necessity," in which he adopted substantially Voltaire's position; that is to say, he admitted the existence of some sort of God, but denied the immortality of the soul. He went even beyond Voltaire in contending that inasmuch as God was all-wise and omnipotent and had created the universe, whatever existed, whether called good or evil, must be right, and vice and virtue were empty distinctions. In his published autobiography Franklin says he had passed through the dangerous period of his life "without any wilful, gross immorality or injustice that might have been expected from my want of religion," but in the first draft he added, "Some foolish intrigues with low women excepted, which, from the expense, were rather more prejudicial to me than to them." The author of this book points out that, as a matter of fact, his conduct, while he was under the influence of the views expressed in "Liberty and Necessity," that what we call evil can be no worse than what we call good, had been by no means above reproach. He had wronged Miss Read, whose affections he had won, and he had embezzled Mr. Vernon's money. Both wrongs he eventually tried to right. He made Miss Read his wife and he returned the embezzled money. These proofs of repentance were given after he had begun to suspect, as he tells us, that his early doctrine, "though it might be true, was not very useful." When he returned to Philadelphia after his first sojourn in London he set himself to the task of working out some form of religion that would suit him, and, in the year 1728, being then 22 years old, he framed a curious compend, to which may be given the name of Franklin's creed, consisting of thirteen articles. The twelfth of these, which is entitled "Chastity," runs as follows: "Rarely use venery, but for health or offspring. Never to dulness, weakness, or to the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation." He also constructed a liturgy, in which there is a prayer against lasciviousness. Yet, in the midst of this creed and prayer making, he records of himself: "That hard-to-be-governed passion of youth had hurried me frequently into intrigues with low women that fell in my way, which were attended with some expense and great inconvenience, besides a continual risk to my health by a distemper, which, of all things, I dreaded, though, by great good luck, I escaped it." Franklin's abridgment of the Anglican prayer book was made in 1772 at the country seat of Sir Francis Dashwood, Lord le Despencer, a reformed rake who had turned deist and was taking a gentlemanly interest in religion. He had been, it is said, a companion of John Wilkes, Budd Doddington, Paul Whitehead, the Earl of Sandwich, and other reckless characters, who established themselves as an order of monks at Medmenham Abbey, where they held mock religious ceremonies and where the trial of the celebrated Chevalier D'Eon was held to prove his disputed sex. An old book called "Chrysal; or The Adventures of a Guinea," professes to describe the doings of these lively blades. The copy of the prayer book which Franklin and Lord le Despencer went over and marked with the pen is now in the possession of Mr. Howard Edwards of Philadelphia. From this copy Lord le Despencer had the abridgement printed at his own expense; a single copy of it now costs over a thousand dollars. The preface, which, although nominally coming from Lord le Despencer, was really written by Franklin, is described as an exquisitely pious little essay, although all reference to the sacraments and to the divinity of the Saviour had been stricken out of the abridgment, and short work had been made of the Athanasian and Apostle creeds.

II.

It has been commonly asserted by his biographers that Franklin had but one illegitimate child, a son, but, from a manuscript letter in the possession of the Pennsylvania Historic Society, and printed for the first time in the book before us, we learn that he had also an illegitimate daughter, married to John Foxcroft, who was at one time Postmaster of Philadelphia. In three letters, also written by Franklin to Foxcroft, which are in the State Department at Washington, he sends "love to my daughter." There is also in Bigelow's edition of his works a letter in which Franklin refers to Mrs. Foxcroft as his daughter. Who was the mother of Mrs. Foxcroft is unknown, but Mr. Paul Leicester seems to have identified the mother of Franklin's illegitimate son William, eventually the royal Governor of New Jersey. He has found in a pamphlet, written during Franklin's heated controversy with the Proprietary party in Pennsylvania, the assertion that the mother of his son William was a woman named Barbara, who worked in his house as a servant for £10 a year; that he kept her in that position until her death, when he had her borne to the grave in silence, without a pall, tomb or monument. By Miss Read, Franklin had two children, who are commonly regarded as legitimate. The first was a son, Francis Folger Franklin, who died of the smallpox when only 4 years old. The other child was a daughter, Sarah, who married Richard Bache. Whether any marriage ceremony was ever performed between Franklin and the mother of Mrs. Bache is doubtful. It is certain that during Franklin's absence in London, Miss Read had married a man named Rogers. He deserted her, but was not known to be dead at the time when Franklin took her openly to wife, namely, Sept. 1, 1730. There is no record of the marriage at Christ's Church, of which Mrs. Rogers was a member, but the two offspring of the union, Francis and Sarah, were baptized there as legitimate children, and, in a deed executed three or four years after 1730, Mr. and Mrs. Franklin are spoken of as husband and wife.

The fact that Franklin's illegitimate son William, but not apparently his illegitimate daughter also, was brought up under the same roof with his legitimate children, partly enables us to understand the odium in which Franklin was held by many of the upper classes in Philadelphia, even when he was well received by the best people in England and France. We may here mention that William Franklin had, in his turn, an illegitimate son, Temple Franklin, who became the companion and secretary of his grandfather in England and France. According to most of Franklin's biographers, his wife tenderly nurtured William, but the author of the book before us adduces evidence to show that as William grew up she learned to hate him. Thus we learn from the diary of Daniel Fisher, who, for a time, lived in Franklin's house as his clerk, that Mrs. Franklin was of such a "turbulent temper" that he felt constrained to leave. With reference to William Franklin, he says: "I have often seen him pass to and from his father's apartments upon business (for he does not eat, drink or sleep in the house) without the least compliment between Mrs. Franklin and him, or any sort of notice taken of each other, till, one day, as I was sitting with her in the passage, when the young gentleman came by, she exclaimed to me (he not hearing), 'Mr. Fisher, there goes the greatest villain upon earth.' This greatly confounded and perplexed me, but did not hinder her from pursuing her invectives in the foulest terms I ever heard from a gentlewoman." Mrs. Franklin seems to have been a stout, handsome woman, and her husband said of her in one of his letters that if she had any faults, he had grown so used to them that he no longer perceived them. She could not have been, however, a congenial companion in his studies or in his political and diplomatic career, for one of her letters, here printed, shows her to have been very illiterate. So much of Franklin's extraordinary letter on the choice of a mistress as can properly be published is reproduced in the book before us. After assuring his correspondent that marriage is the proper remedy for "the violent natural inclinations you mention," he proceeds to say: "If you will not take this counsel and persist in thinking a commerce with the sex inevitable, then I repeat my former advice that in all your amours you should prefer somewhat advanced in life women to young ones. You call this a paradox, and demand my reasons." Franklin goes on to give eight, of which three must be passed over in silence. Some of them, however, may be named: "First, because they have more knowledge of the world, and their minds are better stored with observations; their conversation is more improving and more lastingly agreeable. Secondly, because when women cease to be handsome they study to be good. To maintain their influence over men they supply the diminution of beauty by an augmentation of utility. They learn to do a thousand services, small and great. Thirdly, because there is no hazard of children, which, irregularly produced, may be attended with much inconvenience. Fourthly, because, through more experience, they are more prudent and discreet in conducting an intrigue to prevent suspicion. The commerce with them is therefore safe with regard to your reputation and with regard to theirs. Seventhly, because the compunction is less. The having made a young girl miserable may give you frequent bitter reflections, none of which can attend the making an old woman happy."

III.

How is it possible to reconcile the distinguished social position to which Franklin attained abroad with the decidedly lower plane which he occupied in his adopted town? It is certain that, while in England, he associated on the most intimate terms with eminent literary and scientific men. Distinguished travellers from the Continent used to call on him to pay their respects. He stayed at noblemen's country seats, and, although a deist, with the Bishop of St. Asaph. He corresponded with all these people in the most friendly and easy manner; they were delighted with his conversation and could never see enough of him. Later, in France, he was positively worshipped, and the Court circles received him with enthusiasm. In Philadelphia, on the other hand, the colonial aristocracy, considered as a body, were not on friendly terms with him. No doubt his numerous friends included some members of aristocratic families, but our author is able to find few evidences of the close intimacy and affection which he enjoyed among the best people of Europe. The opinion is expressed that this hostility was not altogether due to his humble origin, or to the little printing office and stationery store where he sold goose feathers, as well as writing materials, and bought old rags. These disadvantages do not supply an adequate explanation, for his accomplishments and wit raised him far above his early surroundings, and the colonial society of Philadelphia was not illiberal in such matters. The principal cause of the animosity exhibited toward him seems to have been his violent opposition to the proprietary party to which most of the upper classes belonged. Once having this ground of dislike, it was easy for them to strengthen and excuse it by the gossip about his illegitimate son and about the son's mother being kept as a servant in his house. They ridiculed the small economies he practised, and branded his religious and moral theorizing as hypocrisy.

The author of this book does not undertake to determine precisely how much money Franklin made in the printing business. He seems to have been more largely employed than any other printer on this side of the Atlantic, for nearly all the important printing of the middle colonies and a large part of that of the southern colonies came to his office. He made enough to retire at 42 years of age, having been working for himself only twenty years. By this time he had invested some of his savings in houses and lands in Philadelphia, and, on turning over his interest in the business to his foreman, David Hall, the latter agreed to pay Franklin a thousand pounds a year for eighteen years. This was a very good income for those times, and more than equivalent in purchasing power to $10,000 at the present day. After his withdrawal from business he remained Postmaster of Philadelphia, and, in 1753, after he had held that office for sixteen years, he was appointed Postmaster-General of all the colonies. This position he retained until he was dismissed from it by the British Government in 1774, on the eve of the Revolution. There was some salary attached to these offices, that of Postmaster-General yielding £300. As agent of Pennsylvania in England he received £500 a year, and for discharging a like function he received from Massachusetts £400, from Georgia £200, and from New Jersey £100. In 1766 the income from his invested savings is supposed to have been £700. As Minister to France he had at first £500 a year and his expenses, but during the last six years of his mission in Paris he received £2,500. It has been wrongly asserted by some of his biographers that, when Governor of Pennsylvania, after the Revolution, he declined to receive any salary for his three years' service. As a matter of fact, he accepted the salary, but spent it in charity, and bequests of it were made in his will. He died well off for the times, leaving an estate estimated at considerably over $100,000. The rapid rise in value of houses and land in Philadelphia after the Revolution accounts for a part of this sum. He owned five or six large houses in Philadelphia, a printing house which he built for his grandson, and several small houses. He had, also, a number of vacant lots in the town, a house and lot in Boston, a tract of land in Nova Scotia, another large tract in Georgia, and still another in Ohio. His personal property, consisting mostly of bonds and money, was worth from $60,000 to $70,000.

IV.

Franklin was about 70 years of age when, on Sept. 26, 1776, he was deputed by the Continental Congress to represent the United Colonies in France. The astonishing success of his mission, from both a political and a personal point of view, is too well known to need comment, but it is sometimes overlooked that Franklin's conduct at Paris did not escape censure at the hands of some of his fellow countrymen. Our author considers, at some length, the violent attacks made upon Franklin by Arthur Lee, and, while the philosopher is absolved from the charge of personal corruption, it is admitted that he came nearer at this period than ever before in his life to sinking his great fame. Lee's most effective assault was levelled at Franklin and his nephew, Jonathan Williams, and was published in a pamphlet entitled "Observations on Certain Commercial Transactions in France." Williams was one of Franklin's Boston nephews, who turned up in Paris poor and without employment. Franklin was always taking care of his relatives by placing them in Government positions, and he gave this one the place of naval agent at Nantes. There Williams had charge of the purchase of supplies for American men-of-war, sold the prizes that were brought in, and also bought and shipped arms and ammunition. It was a large business, involving the handling of enormous sums of money, and there is no doubt that there were opportunities in it for making a fortune. Franklin and Silas Deane seemed to have let Williams manage this department pretty much as he pleased, and Lee had some ground for suspecting that Deane was privately interested with Williams in the sale of prizes. Williams certainly expended large sums on Deane's orders alone, and he was continually calling for more money from the commissioners' bankers. Lee asked Franklin to put a stop to this state of things, which the latter not only refused to do, but wrote a letter to his nephew justifying him in everything. The letter is dated at Passy, Dec. 22, 1777, and runs as follows: "I received yours of the 16th, and am concerned, as well as you, at the difference between Messrs. Deane and Lee, but cannot help it. You need, however, be under no concern as to your orders being only from Mr. Deane. As you have always acted uprightly and ably for the public service, you would be justified if you had no orders at all. But, as he generally consulted with me and had my approbation in the orders he gave, and I know they were for the best and aimed at the public good, I hereby certify you that I approve and join in those you receive from him, and desire you to proceed in the execution of the same."

Williams at last sent in his accounts, and Lee went over them, marking some items "manifestly unjust," others "plainly exorbitant," and others "altogether unsatisfactory, for want of names, dates or receipts." He refused to approve the accounts, sent them to Congress, and asked Williams to produce his vouchers. The vouchers, Lee tells us, were never produced. He asked for them again and again, but there was always some excuse, and he charges that Williams had in his possession 100,000 livres more than was accounted for. Eventually John Adams, who had come out to supersede Deane, joined with Franklin in giving Williams an order on the bankers for the balance claimed by him, but the order expressly stated that it was not to be understood as an approval of his accounts, for which he must be responsible to Congress. Franklin appointed certain persons to audit the accounts, but at a time, Lee says, when they were on the point of sailing for America, and, therefore, could not act. Adams seems to have been convinced that Williams was not all that could be desired, and he and Franklin soon dismissed him from his office, again reminding him that this was not to be considered as an approval of his accounts. Lee's charge against Franklin was that he had connived at the acts of his nephew and done everything possible to shield him and enable him to get possession of the balance of money he claimed. The matter was never officially investigated. The fact is here noted that, although Lee and Izard were continually hinting at evil practices on Franklin's part, and sometimes directly stigmatized him as the "father of corruption," and deeply involved in the most disreputable schemes, they never produced any proofs that he had enriched himself or was directly engaged in anything discreditable. There seems to be no doubt that certain people were making money under cover of the loose way in which affairs were managed. Franklin must have known of this, as well as Adams and the other commissioners; but neither he nor they derived profit from it individually. Lee and Izard wrote so much and so violently about the alleged embezzlements, that they dug the graves of their own reputations. Franklin, on his part, said and wrote very little on the subject. He sent no letters to members of Congress undermining the characters of his fellow commissioners; the few statements that he made were exceedingly mild and temperate, and were usually to the effect that there were differences and disputes which he regretted. We are reminded of Dr. Johnson's assertion that no man was ever written down except by himself. A remark to much the same effect was once made by Franklin: "Spots of dirt thrown upon my character I suffered, while fresh, to remain. I did not choose to spread by endeavoring to remove them, but relied upon the vulgar adage that they would all rub off when they were dry." It is certain that, on the whole, public opinion in the United States was then and has since remained in favor of Franklin, and the distinguished men of France were, without exception, on his side.

V.

When, in April, 1778, John Adams arrived to coöperate with Franklin, he evinced none of the rancor of Lee and Izard, but he candidly avowed that he found the public business in great confusion. "It has never been methodically conducted. There never was, before I came, a minute book, a letter book, or an account book; and it is not possible to obtain a clear idea of our affairs." He found, also, that a number of persons had been making money out of the embassy; of these Jonathan Williams was but one. Adams gives many interesting glimpses of Franklin's life in Paris. Thus, he was present at the Academy of Sciences when a general cry arose among the sensation-loving people that Franklin and Voltaire should be introduced to each other. They, accordingly, bowed and spoke. This was not enough, however, and the clamor continued, until it was explained that "they must embrace in French fashion." Thereupon the two old men began hugging and kissing each other, which satisfied the company, and the cry spread through the whole country, "how beautiful it was to see Solon and Sophocles embrace!"

Mr. Fisher thinks that some of Adams's estimates of Franklin, though not satisfactory to his eulogists, are just. The following, for instance, is quoted: "That he was a great genius, a great wit, a great humorist, a great satirist and a great politician is certain. That he was a great philosopher, a great moralist and a great statesman is more questionable." The author of this book believes that this brief statement will bear the test of very close investigation. It gives full credit to Franklin's qualities as a humorous and satirical writer, and even as a politician, the last-named word being used advisedly, for up to that time Franklin had done nothing that deserved the name of great statesmanship. He had had, no doubt, a long career in Pennsylvania politics, where the exercise of his abilities was for the most part confined to a single province, and, in the attempt to change the proprietary government of the province into a royal Government, he had been in the wrong. While representing Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Georgia in England from the time of the Stamp Act until the outbreak of the Revolution, he had accomplished nothing, except that his examination before Parliament had encouraged the colonists to persist in their opposition; he had got himself into a very bad scrape about the Hutchinson letters, and his plan of reconciliation with the mother country had broken down. In France, the Government being already very favorably disposed toward the colonies, there was but little for the American Embassy to do, except to conduct the business of sending supplies and selling prizes, in which Deane and Beaumarchais did most of the work, while Franklin had kept no accounts, and allowed his papers to get into confusion, was utterly unable to keep the envoys in harmony, and had not made any effective appeal to Congress to change the absurd system which permitted the sending to a foreign country of three commissioners having equal powers. It is conceded that, in the last years of his mission in France, he did work which was more valuable; but it was not until some years afterward, when he was past 80, and on the verge of the grave, that he accomplished in the Constitutional Convention of 1787 the one act of his life which may be called a brilliant stroke of statesmanship. A great moralist Franklin certainly was not. As a philosopher, by which Adams meant what we now call a man of science, Franklin was distinguished, but can scarcely be denominated great. It could not be said that he deserved to be ranked with Kepler or Newton. His discovery of the nature of lightning was picturesque and striking, and gave him popular renown, but it could not put him in the front rank of discoverers.

From a later passage, we learn how Adams tried to combat the French idea that Franklin was the chief American legislator. "'Yes,' said M. Marbois, 'he is celebrated as the great philosopher and the great legislator of America.' 'He is,' said I, 'a great philosopher, but, as a legislator for America he has done very little. It is universally believed in France, England and all Europe that his electric wand has accomplished all this revolution. But nothing is more groundless. He has done very little. It is believed that he made all the American Constitutions and their confederation; but he made neither. He did not even make the Constitution of Pennsylvania, bad as it is.'" The French, however, persisted in believing that Franklin was the originator of the Revolution, and that he was a sort of Solon who had prepared laws for all the revolted colonies, directed their movements and revised all their State papers and public documents. It was under the influence of this notion that they worshipped him as the personification of liberty. Mr. Fisher suggests that it may well have been extremely irritating to Adams and others to find the French people assuming that the old patriarch in the fur cap had emancipated in the American woods a rude and strange people who, without him, could not have taken care of themselves. Protest as they might, they never could persuade the French to give up their idea.

VI.

Even now, when more than a hundred years have passed, it is gratifying to our national pride to reflect that a man who was so thoroughly American in his origin and education should have been worshipped by an alien race as no other man, certainly no other American, was ever worshipped by foreigners. It is pointed out, nevertheless, by Mr. Fisher that the enjoyment of this stupendous reputation, overshadowing and dwarfing the Jeffersons, Adamses, Jays, and all other public men who went to Europe, was marred by some unpleasant consequences. Jealousies were aroused, not only among individuals, but, to a certain extent, among all the American people. It was too much. He had ceased to be one of them. It was rumored that he would never return to America, but would resign and settle down among those strangers who treated him as though he were a god. It was also inevitable that a worse suspicion should arise. He was too subservient, it was said, to France. He yielded everything to her. He was turning her from an ally into a ruler. He could no longer see her designs, or, if he saw them, he approved of them. This suspicion gained such force that it became the controlling principle with Adams and Jay when they went to Paris to arrange the treaty of peace with England after the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown in October, 1781. Negotiations to that end began in the spring of the following year, and they were conducted by Franklin as sole Commissioner until June, when he was taken sick and was incapacitated for three months.

Full recognition is given by the present biographer to the fact that, while Franklin was carrying on the negotiations alone, he insisted upon most of the terms which were afterward agreed upon: First of all, independence, and, in addition to that, the right to fish on the Newfoundland Banks, and a settlement of boundaries, and that he added a claim, not afterward pressed by the others, namely, that Canada should be ceded to the United States. In exchange for Canada he was prepared to allow some compensation to the Tories for their loss of property during the war. Adams and Jay, on taking up the negotiations, dropped Canada entirely and insisted stoutly to the end that no compensation should be granted to the Tories. It is further acknowledged by Mr. Fisher that Franklin's policy in obeying the explicit instructions of Congress to do nothing without the knowledge of the French Government and in making absolutely sure of the friendship and assistance of France was the sound one, especially as, with his wonderful accomplishments and adaptability, he could be friendly and agreeable without making any substantial sacrifices. Adams, on the other hand, went at everything with a club and could understand no other mode of conducting negotiations. Adams gloried in breaking the instructions of Congress to take the advice of France and described the conciliatory methods followed by Franklin as a "base system." It was Franklin, however, who in the end had to smooth the matter over and to pacify the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, and it was he who submitted to Congress a specious excuse for the violation of its instructions: "We did what appeared to all of us best at the time, and if we have done wrong the Congress will do right, after hearing us, to censure us. Their nomination of five persons to the service seems to mark that they had some dependence on our joint judgment, since one alone could have made a treaty by direction of the French Ministry as well as twenty."

After all was over Franklin wrote a long letter to Congress about the treaty, which, in view of the attitude eventually taken by the Federalist party toward France, must be deemed a remarkable proof of forecast. After saying that he discredited the suspicions of the treachery of the French court, he thus proceeds to square accounts with Adams: "I ought not, however, to conceal from you that one of my colleagues is of a very different opinion from me in these matters. He thinks the French Minister one of the greatest enemies of our country; that he would have straitened our boundaries, to prevent the growth of our people; contracted our fishery, to obstruct the increase of our seamen; and retain the royalists among us, to keep us divided; that he privately opposes all our negotiations with foreign courts, and afforded us, during the war, the assistance we received, only to keep it alive, that we might be so much the more weakened by it; that to think of gratitude to France is the greatest of follies, and that to be influenced by it would ruin us. He makes no secret of his having these opinions, expresses them publicly, sometimes in presence of the English Ministers, and speaks of hundreds of instances which he could produce in proof of them. None, however, have yet appeared to me, unless the conversations and letter above mentioned are reckoned such. If I were not convinced of the real inability of this Court to furnish the further supplies we asked, I should suspect these discourses of a person in his station might have influenced the refusal; but I think they have gone no further than to occasion a suspicion that we have a considerable party of anti-Gallicans in America who are not Tories, and, consequently, to produce some doubts of the continuance of our friendship. As such doubts may hereafter have a bad effect, I think we cannot take too much care to remove them; and it is therefore I write this, to put you on your guard (believing it my duty, though I know I hazard by it a mortal enmity), and to caution you respecting the insinuations of this gentleman against this Court, and the instances he supposes of their ill will to us, which I take to be as imaginary as I know his fancies to be, that Count de Vergennes and myself are continually plotting against him and employing the news writers of Europe to depreciate his character, &c. But, as Shakespeare says, 'Trifles light as air,' &c. I am persuaded, however, that he means well to his country, is always an honest man, often a wise one, but sometimes and in some things absolutely out of his senses."

VII.

In a final chapter on Franklin, considered as a "Constitution maker," we are reminded that he had no knowledge of technical law, either in practice or as a science. He was once elected Justice of the Peace in Philadelphia, but soon resigned because, as he said, he knew nothing of the rules of English common law. As a public man, however, of long experience, he could not help acquiring considerable knowledge of general laws and of their practical effect. He understood colonial rights, and knew every phase of the controversy with Great Britain, and he had fixed opinions as to constitutional forms and principles. Of the plans of union devised at various times previously to the Revolution for the purpose of uniting the colonies, two were prepared by Franklin. The first scheme of union which he drafted was the one adopted by the Albany conference of 1754, that had been called to make a general treaty with the Indians. That scheme contained the germs of principles which are now fundamental parts of our political system. In 1775, while a member of the Continental Congress, he drafted another plan, which, though not adopted, added new suggestions and developments. He was a member of the State Convention which, in 1776, framed a new Constitution for Pennsylvania. In this instrument he secured the adoption of two of his favorite ideas. He believed that a Legislature should consist of only one house, and that the executive authority, instead of being vested in a single person, should be exercised by a committee. John Adams's depreciatory comment upon this State Constitution was justified, for it proved an utter failure and was replaced by a more suitable one in 1790. The French translations of the American State Constitutions which Franklin caused to be made and widely circulated in France have been credited by Thomas Paine and some of Franklin's biographers with exercising a vast influence in shaping the course of the French revolution. Probably their influence has been exaggerated. Franklin's last work in Constitution making was performed in 1787, when he took part in the Federal Convention which met at Philadelphia and framed our existing Constitution. As he was then 81 years old and suffering so much from the gout and stone that he could not remain standing for any length of time, his important speeches he usually wrote out and had his colleagues read them to the convention. His proposals that the President should receive no salary, that the Legislature should consist of only one house, and that an absolute veto on legislation should not be conceded to the Executive were not accepted by the convention. It was, however, in conformity to a suggestion of his that the great question which long threatened to render abortive the work of the convention was ultimately settled. It was Franklin who proposed that in the lower house the representation of the States should be in proportion to population, but that in the Senate each State should have an equal vote, and that money bills should originate only in the lower house. By this compromise every one was satisfied, and it became a fundamental principle of our Federal organic law. A part of it became, indeed, more fundamental than any other, for the clause asserting the equal representation of the States in the Senate is the only part of the Constitution which cannot be changed by the machinery for emendation without the consent of the particular State affected. It was he, too, who persuaded almost all the members of the convention to sign the instrument by avowing that it did not satisfy him, but that he should sign it on the ground that it was better than none. It is Madison who records that "whilst the last members were signing, Dr. Franklin, looking toward the President's chair, at the back of which a rising sun happened to be painted, observed to a few members near him that painters had found it difficult to distinguish in their art a rising from a setting sun. 'I have,' said he, 'often and often in the course of this session and the vicissitudes of my hopes and fears as to its issue looked at that behind the President without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting, but now, at length, I have the happiness to know that it is a rising and not a setting sun.'" M. W. H.

Commercial Cuba.

It is a book for business men which WILLIAM J. CLARK has given us in a large octavo volume of 500 pages entitled *Commercial Cuba* (Scribners). What we have here is a vast amount of valuable data covering almost the entire field of inquiry regarding Cuba and her resources. The data are partly the result of the author's personal observations during his travels in the island, and partly the outcome of laborious classification of existing material collected from many and diverse sources. We need not point out that facts regarding the industrial and commercial capabilities of Cuba, present and prospective, are needed imperatively at the present moment, when events have so radically transformed the relations hitherto existing between Cuba and the United States. For the liberation of the island a thorough knowledge of it was not indispensable. But, if we are to undertake the reconstruction of its government and the development of its resources, it is obvious that our knowledge cannot be too exact and exhaustive. It is, consequently, a great service which the author of this book has rendered to his fellow citizens. That its pages are entirely free from errors of fact or of deduction he would not pretend to affirm, but he has certainly been painstaking in his personal observations, and he is cautious and judicious in his estimates and forecasts based upon the experience of others. The chapters of the work to which we shall principally confine ourselves are those which deal with population, with the modes of internal communication and with the general trade statistics of the island. We would not, however, entirely pass over a preliminary chapter in which the author gives American visitors some useful advice as to how to meet the residents of Cuba.

I.

The opinion is expressed by the author that, although great allowances are made by well-bred Spaniards and Cubans for ignorance of their manners and customs on the part of foreigners, it will be well for American visitors, especially ladies, to conform to the social usages which they find prevailing on the island. It should not be forgotten, for example, that in the higher walks of Cuban society ladies never appear anywhere in public without an escort, either male or female. If a lady be accompanied by a man, he must be a husband, brother, or near relative; otherwise the judgment passed upon her will be even more harsh than if she had no escort at all. It is further to be noted that no matter how well one may know a Cuban or resident Spaniard in a business or social way he will not be invited to meet the ladies of the family until his character, history and position in society are thoroughly known. Even then he will never be permitted to see the unmarried women alone. Letters of introduction are rarely given to men to be presented to ladies, for the reason that he who gives them, even though they be couched in most reserved language, considers that he practically guarantees every future act of the recipient. American visitors are also cautioned against taking literally the profuse expressions of hospitality and good will uttered by Cubans or Spaniards on meeting their acquaintances. So far as the cities and towns are concerned such exaggerated expressions are mere formalities; in the rural districts, on the other hand, will be found a genuine and warm-hearted hospitality which increases as acquaintance becomes more intimate. It should likewise be remembered by persons brought up in the Sabbath-keeping customs of Puritan communities that with the Cubans Sunday is a feast day, given up to social enjoyments after the religious duties of the morning have been performed. Certain saints' days, on the other hand, must be seriously observed, and functions which would be permissible on the Sabbath would be severely reprobated on such anniversaries. It is on Sunday that the cockfights and bullfights take place. Mr. Clark is convinced that, although it is reasonable to suppose that association with Americans will have a tendency to make cruel sports less fashionable, it is hopeless to expect that the puritanical Sabbath can be grafted upon the Cuban usages. Any attempt to graft it would only give rise to irritation, for in this and some other respects the Cubans, although restricted and oppressed by the Government in more important things, have enjoyed a degree of personal liberty, not to say license, not possessed by the average American citizen. To single out a minor point, American women may be surprised to find that Cuban gentlemen smoke anywhere without asking permission of the ladies, either at the cafés, hotels, private residences, or even in the ordinary street cars. The only restriction on the privilege of smoking is imposed at the theatres, and even there one may indulge in it in the corridors. Another custom is not peculiar to Cuba, being followed everywhere on the Continent of Europe, although not in the United Kingdom. At public tables in the cafés or hotels a well-bred Cuban never takes a seat without asking permission, perhaps simply by a sort of interrogative bow, of those who may be already seated there. A similar salutation is made upon taking leave. Of social visiting there is a great deal among both Spaniards and Cubans, but the private dinners and balls are comparatively few. The American visitor is warned that, in calling upon a Cuban family, he should never disturb the cane-seated chairs which are ranged with the greatest regularity along the walls of the reception room. We observe, finally, that the color line is not nearly so closely drawn in Cuba as it is in the United States, and that education, wealth, and personal worth will generally determine a native's position, without regard to the possible presence of colored blood in his veins.

II.

In a chapter on population Mr. Clark analyzes and discusses the latest census of Cuba, which was made in 1887. The whole number of inhabitants at that date was officially stated to be 1,631,687. Of these 1,102,689 were returned as whites, 485,187 as blacks and colored persons, 43,811 as Chinese and other coolies. The percentage of whites to the total population, excluding coolies, was 69.45, while that of the colored people was 30.5. An official table showing the percentage of negroes at various census periods indicates that there is little danger of a black republic in Cuba. In 1841, when the colored people were relatively most numerous, they constituted 58 per cent. In 1860 they had dwindled to 47 per cent., in 1877 to 33 per cent., and in 1887 the percentage was, as we have just seen, 30.5. It is interesting to note Mr. Clark's estimation of the number of people existing in Cuba at the present time; that is to say, November, 1898. He holds that we should begin by adding to the total for 1887 a proportionate rate of increase for the last eleven years similar to that which had been observed for a long term of years previous thereto, such average being about nine-tenths of 1 per cent. annually. This would give, approximately, 1,800,000, from which, our author thinks, should be deducted about 400,000 for the "reconcentrados" and other inhabitants who have died from the results of the insurrection. We should have left 1,400,000 for the present population of the island, excluding the Spanish soldiers. It is taken for granted that Spanish officeholders and many others of their nationality will leave Cuba when it is evacuated by the Spanish forces, but our author thinks that the common soldiers who prefer to remain as citizens, the Cubans returning from foreign lands, and American emigrants, will presently make up a resident population of over a million and a half.

Mr. Clark does not shirk the difficult question: What proportion of the present population, excluding soldiers, is of Spanish birth? Cubans have put the number as low as 150,000. Rowan places it at one-fifth of the entire number of whites, or say 220,000. On the other hand, conservative Americans who have traversed the island thoroughly believe that the number is more nearly 300,000, and that at least 150,000 of them are male adults, this ratio being attributed to the fact that the great majority of emigrants from Spain are of the male sex. Now let us mark how the inhabitants are divided in respect of occupations and business interests. In the first place, all important officials, and almost all the clergy, have hitherto been Spaniards. It is a significant fact that no native Cuban has ever been Archbishop of Santiago or Bishop of Havana, the two dioceses of the island; that only two natives have ever been canons of the Cathedral of Havana; that in 1871 only two rectors and three chaplains in the diocese of Havana were Cubans, and that in only 22 out of 144 parishes in the same diocese were there Cuban priests. This ecclesiastical discrimination against Cubans helps us to understand why the provisional Government should have passed, as one of its first measures, a law to make civil marriages alone valid. It also explains the extraordinary development of Freemasonry in Cuba. Mr. Clark says that, in proportion to the total population, there are more Free and Accepted Masons in the island than in any country in the world. We remark, in passing, for the benefit of American members of the Masonic fraternity, that all Freemasonry in Cuba, including the first three degrees, is worked according to the Scottish Rite. Returning to the division of occupations and interests, we learn that the landowners are, generally, Cubans, although there are very large holdings in the hands of the Spanish, English, Americans, Germans and French. The professional and literary men of the island, also, are principally Cubans. The cigar and tobacco interests are mostly in Cuban hands, although Spanish, German and English capitalists occupy conspicuous positions in the trade. The sugar industry, while followed to a great extent by the Cubans, has, during the last two insurrections, tended to drift into Spanish, English, French and American hands. The mining industry is almost entirely American. On the other hand, the private banking is, principally, transacted by Spaniards. In the import and export trade the Spaniards have had a decided advantage, owing to their closer connection with the Custom House officials; nevertheless, a good deal of business has been done by German, English and French houses. Americans, we are told, have never been especially popular with Spaniards, or trusted by them, so far as foreign commerce is concerned. The railroads are chiefly owned by Spanish, English, American and French capitalists, but they have been, for the most part, under Spanish and English management. The great majority of merchants, whether large or small, and even in the lesser towns, are Spaniards, although there are, of course, some Cubans, and here and there an Englishman, a German, an American, a Hollander, or even a Chinaman. The artisans in the cities are largely Spaniards, but the majority of the cigarmakers are Cubans. In the large towns, and especially in Havana, a large proportion of the ordinary white laborers are Spanish peasants. Some of these laborers are encountered in the rural districts, especially on plantations owned by Spaniards or other foreigners, as miners, and as section hands on the railroads. The seafaring people along the coasts are Spaniards to a greater extent than would be supposed. Mr. Clark seems to think that a majority of them were born in Spain. The majority, too, of machinists and steam engineers, as well as railroad hands, are Spaniards and Cubans. The chief engineers, however, of nearly all the large sugar estates are foreigners: Americans, English, Germans and French. In an examination of the labor problem, the opinion is expressed that those Spaniards and Canary Islanders who remain in Cuba will, for a long time to come, object to dwelling in the rural districts, unless employed in large numbers in the same locality, for fear that they cannot be adequately protected against Cuban prejudice. We are told that this state of things is to be regretted, for the reason that many of these laborers are the best that have ever been available for the owners of mines or plantations. Especially are the Gallican and Catalan peasants noteworthy for their industry and other commendable qualities. The best kind of labor obtainable would be, we are informed, that furnished by discharged Spanish soldiers, who are observed to work faithfully at any place or under any conditions where fair compensation can be had for toil. No doubt there are many colored Cubans who work equally well, but it seems that they, as a whole, when resident in the rural districts, prefer to cultivate small patches of ground for themselves rather than to work for wages. It is Mr. Clark's theory that they follow this course in order to demonstrate their personal independence, which they have been anxious to establish since they were freed from slavery. The author of the book before us believes that in Cuba, as in Argentina, the solution of the labor problem will ultimately be found in the encouragement of immigration from Italy.

III.

Internal means of communication on an extensive scale seem never to have been considered essential in Cuba, for the reason that, the island being long and narrow and possessing innumerable harbors, it is no great distance from any point in the interior to some convenient port. In the case, indeed, of important inland towns, railways have been constructed to the most convenient seaports. At present all the public railway companies in Cuba do not possess, in the aggregate, more than 1,100 miles of track. The fact should not be overlooked, however, that at least 120 of the larger sugar and tobacco plantations have or had private railroads. These have been of every description, from a portable track a few hundred feet long to a system of seventy miles of standard-gauge track, controlled by a single large plantation company. The smaller of these private lines have been used simply for the transportation of cane from the fields to the nearest sugar mill, while those of greater extent have stretched out through many plantations from some large *central* (sugar mill), which, in turn, has had a line running to the nearest shipping point on the coast, or on some public railway. The general railway system of the island, so far as it has been completed, begins in the east at the city of Santa Clara and ends in the west at the city of Pinar del Rio, the centre of the network being Havana. The importance of extending the system eastward from Santa Clara to the city of Santiago de Cuba, a distance of about 280 miles, has long been recognized, both by the Spanish Government and by private individuals. No less than three different surveys have been made with that object in view. The country which the extension will open is the least developed part of the island, is rich agriculturally and is exceedingly well stocked with timber and minerals.

Many wagon roads are indicated on the map, but when they are traversed by travellers they are found to be exceedingly bad, the depth of mud in wet weather being almost inconceivable. Of the *calzadas*, or paved roads, laid down on the large charts, the most important and the longest is the so-called Western *Calzada*, which runs from Havana nominally to Pinar del Rio, a distance of about 100 miles. From Havana to San Cristobal, some sixty miles, it is a fine, hard road, but from the latter place to Pinar del Rio it is little better than the ordinary cart track of the open country. The Southeastern *Calzada* is said to be in good condition as far as Guines, thirty miles distant from Havana, and the same thing may be said of the Southern *Calzada*, which stretches from Havana across the island to Batabano. The Camino Central, which extends lengthwise through the centre of the island, from Havana to Santiago de Cuba, is not a *calzada* at all, except at infrequent intervals in the vicinity of the larger towns. Its condition in eastern Cuba is such, during the rainy season, that the mules used for transportation of the mails leave the roadway wherever they can and walk on top of the low stone wall bounding it for much of the way. Evidently road building on a large scale is the first thing essential to the commercial development of Cuba. Mr. Clark suggests that the incoming government, recognizing the pressing necessity for highway improvement, may deem it expedient to grant concessions to private parties for the construction of turnpikes and stone roads. In all Cuba, at present, there is but a total of 250 miles of improved highway, nearly all of which is in the province of Havana. The province of Santiago de Cuba has less than six miles of improved roads, and Puerto Principe and Santa Clara even less.

The chapter on the general statistics of the island is based on official information referring to the state of things before the outbreak of the recent insurrection in 1895. According to a statement put forth by the Government in 1894, the total number of houses and buildings in the towns was, at that time, 89,435. Of sugar plantations at the same date there were said to be 1,100; of coffee plantations, 191; of tobacco plantations, 8,875; of cattle ranches, 4,298, and of farms, 23,238. These figures are about 50 per cent. lower than those given by Cabrera in his enumeration of rural property for 1862, six years before the outbreak of the ten years' war. Although there had been, upon the whole, a great shrinkage in the value per acre of plantations between 1862 and 1894, Mr. Clark thinks that their total value in the last-named year was not far from $300,000,000, while that of their annual products was about $85,000,000. In this computation no allowance is made for industries unconnected with land. The approximate value of the total exports from Cuba to the United States in a prosperous ante-bellum year was $98,388,000, of which $52,288,000 was credited to sugar, $8,875,000 to leaf tobacco, $2,300,000 to cigars and cigarettes, upward of $2,000,000 to fruits and cocoanuts, $1,425,000 to molasses, nearly $800,000 to choice woods, and $300,000 to iron ore. The aggregate imports into Cuba from the United States in 1893 were but $15,448,000, of which $5,401,000 was represented by hog products, $1,095,000 by boards, deals, planks, joists, &c.; $2,821,000 by wheat flour, $631,000 by coal, $554,000 by potatoes, and $514,000 by mineral oil. In the same year Spain exported to Cuba merchandise valued at $22,502,000, and received from the island in return commodities appraised at $7,285,000. It is probable that nearly all the goods heretofore taken from Spain will ultimately come from the United States. Heretofore about two-thirds of the total quantity of American flour consumed in Cuba has been introduced by way of Spain and credited to Spanish producers.